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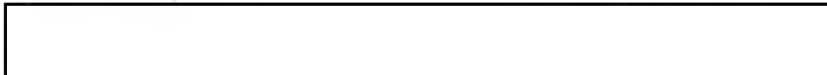
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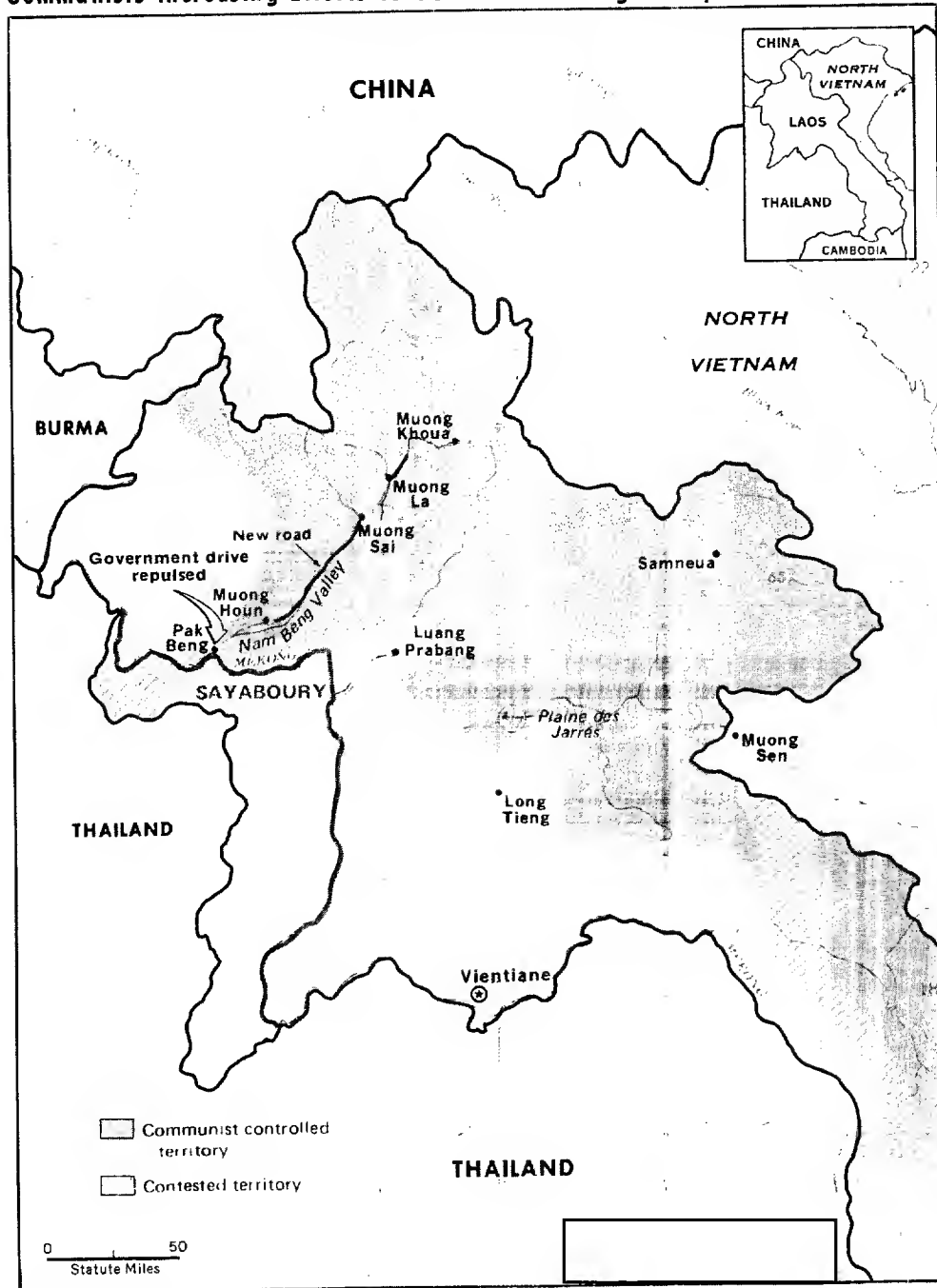
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Communists Increasing Efforts to Control Nam Beng Valley in Northern Laos



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Laos: The Pathet Lao are intensifying their efforts to bring the entire Nam Beng Valley in the northwest under Communist control.

Pathet Lao forces have repulsed a government drive to reoccupy the high ground overlooking the Mekong River village of Pak Beng. The government's presence has now been reduced to one major outpost some eight miles west of Pak Beng.

The Pathet Lao, who have been moving new units into the valley since last summer, now significantly outnumber the government troops. In recent days, government troops have been handicapped by the large influx of refugees fleeing enemy forces, and it appears to be only a matter of time before this area falls under Communist control.

The timing of the Pathet Lao campaign, which has been gaining momentum since the capture of Pak Beng in April 1969, suggests that it was undertaken, at least in part, to facilitate the Chinese road building project.



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As of early January, the road was motorable to the outskirts of Muong Houn, some 27 miles from the Mekong River.

Communist control of the Nam Beng Valley has implications for Sayaboury Province on the other side of the Mekong.

the long-range Communist objective in this part of Laos is to establish a base near Pak Beng in order to support Communist insurgents in Sayaboury Province and also in northern Thailand. For some years now, the Nam Beng Valley has been an infiltration corridor for men and supplies destined for these areas.

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Map)

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Philippines: Student demonstrations against President Marcos' anticipated efforts to pack a constitutional convention resulted in bloody riots yesterday.

The rioting, which was well-organized and apparently pre-planned, broke out in front of the presidential palace. It spread to other areas of Manila and involved some 20,000 people. In repeated exchanges of gunfire between students and police, several students were killed and over 20 injured. The military were called in to augment police antiriot forces, and the armed forces chief of staff reportedly was personally directing the military counteraction.

Marcos has attempted to turn the incident to his advantage by charging the Manila mayor, a political opponent, with tardiness in calling out the police. It is doubtful, however, that he can blunt resentment over his expected efforts to prolong his tenure.

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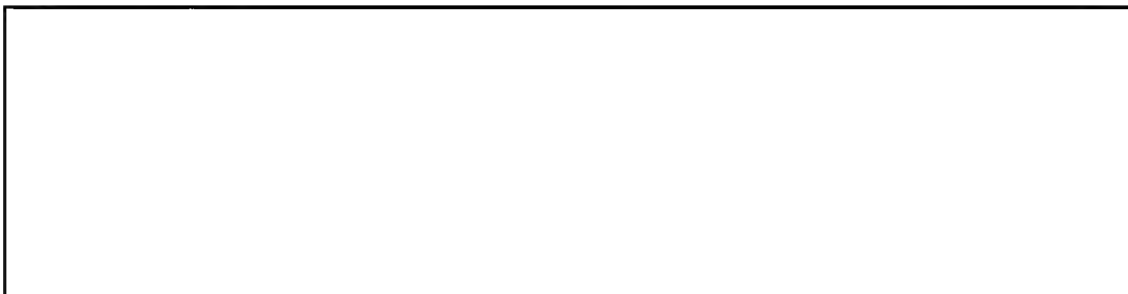
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Nationalist China: Taipei is disturbed about the escape of the most widely known leader of the Taiwanese Independence Movement.

Peng Ming-min, former chairman of the political science department at Taiwan National University, fled Taiwan early this year and has been granted asylum in Sweden. Peng had been under surveillance since his release in 1964 after 13 months imprisonment for circulating "subversive" literature at the university.



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The small and fragmented Taiwanese Independence Movement has been little more than a nuisance to Taipei. Nevertheless, Peng's views are extremely embarrassing to the Nationalist regime, which has denied a significant political role to the Taiwanese majority for 21 years. Taipei probably sees this as a particularly inappropriate time for Peng to speak out freely because the Nationalists believe their international status is already threatened by growing Western interest in developing ties with Peking.



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Lesotho: Prime Minister Jonathan had declared a state of emergency following incomplete election results suggesting that his ruling party lost last week's general elections. The opposition party leader has been arrested, and the constitution has been suspended. Violent outbreaks are possible if Jonathan tries to annul the election or calls in ballot boxes for a "recount," and police are uncertain of their ability to maintain order.

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Cuba: The appointment of Ramiro Valdes Menendez to succeed Pedro Miret as first vice minister of the armed forces should effectively squelch long-standing rumors that Valdes was in disfavor. His removal from the position of interior minister in July 1968 so he could "take an advanced military course" caused speculation that he was no longer in the good graces of Fidel and Raul Castro. His new assignment, however, ranks him second only to Raul Castro in the armed forces ministry and is a clear indication that he enjoys the confidence of the leadership. The course he took was presumably the same one attended previously by most of his military peers on the party's political bureau and central committee.

(continued)

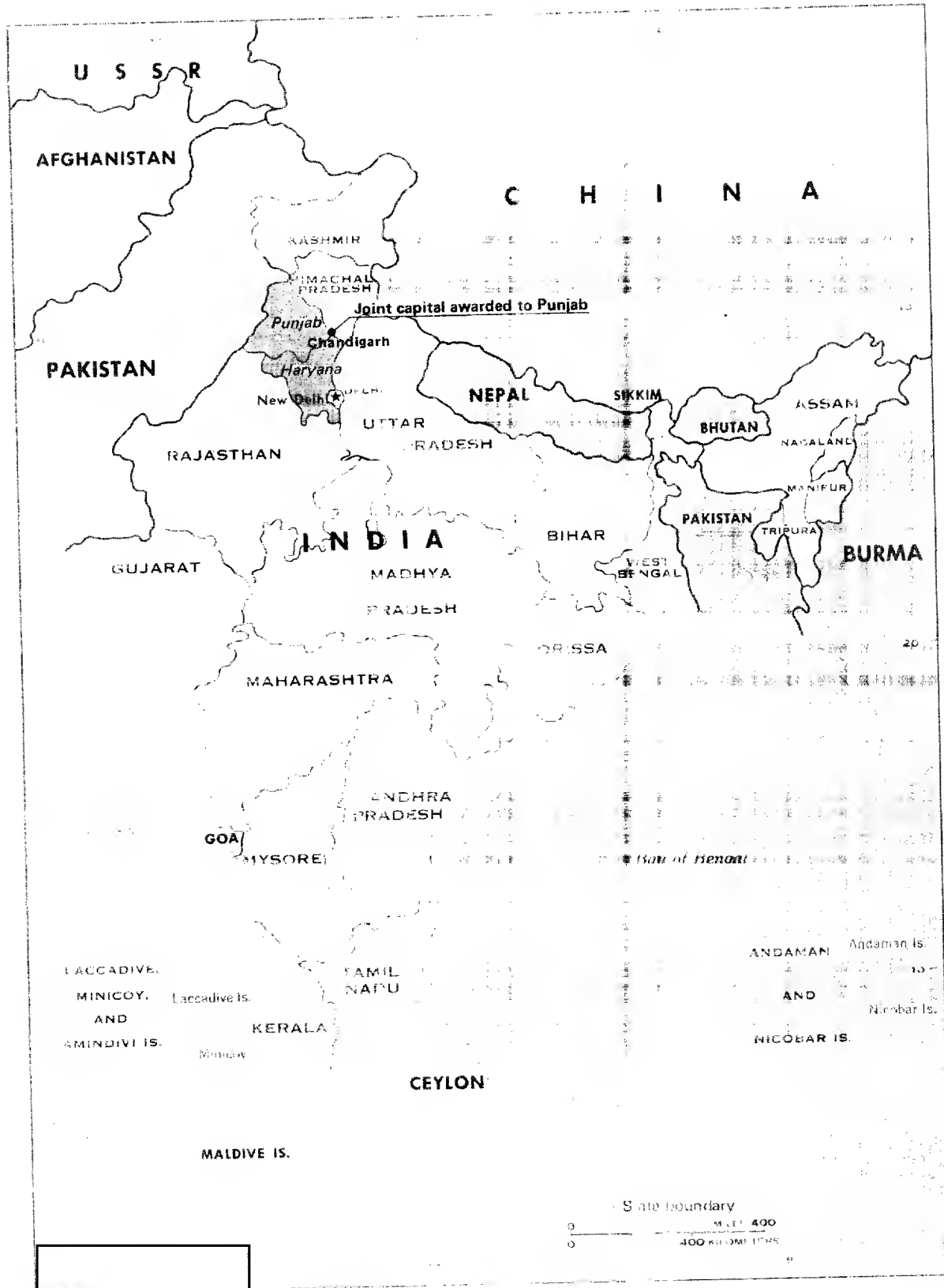
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India: The political repercussions of Prime Minister Gandhi's decision to award the city of Chandigarh to the Punjab may prove far more significant than the immediate violence that the announcement stimulated. The security forces should be able to contain the disturbances in Haryana, the state that also claimed Chandigarh, but the state government there could be forced from office by popular reaction to the decision. Haryana is presently controlled by that wing of the Congress Party loyal to Mrs. Gandhi, who is involved in a continuing struggle with the rival Organization Congress Party. A different decision or no decision at all might have been even more costly for Mrs. Gandhi, however, in terms of both politics and domestic disorders.

25X1 (Map)

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